

REMARKS

Entry of the above amendments and reconsideration of this application are respectfully requested. Upon entry of the amendments, this application will contain claims 1-45 pending and under consideration. For the following reasons, reconsideration and allowance of this application are requested.

The Examiner is thanked for the indication of allowability of claims 1-15 and 27-29. Claims 1-15 have not been amended. Independent claim 26 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 29, thus directing independent claim 26 to subject matter indicated as allowable in the Office Action. As a result, the standing rejection of claim 26 as prior pending is rendered moot.

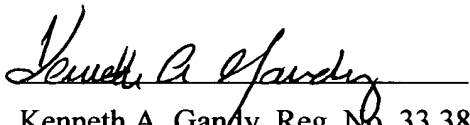
Claims 16-25 and 30-45 stand rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over the combination of Khosravi et al. and Hiles et al. To the extent maintained against these claims as amended, this rejection is traversed for the following reasons.

The independent claims of this rejected group include claims 16, 30, 31 and 42. Each of these claims has been amended to include a feature related to the conformance and bonding of a surface of an extension to an underlying layer of material by one or more of dehydrothermal bonding, crosslinking, or bonding with a resorbable or non-resorbable biocompatible bonding agent. Similar features are found in prior-pending claim 29, which was indicated in the Office Action to contain subject matter allowable over the prior art of record. In particular, Khosravi et al. does not teach or suggest such claimed structural features, and thus even assuming that the material taught by Hiles et al. could be properly combined with the structural teachings of Khosravi et al.,

the claims define patentably over this combination. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is solicited.

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance containing claims 1-45. The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney if there are questions about this submission or other matters that may be handled in that fashion to expedite the present prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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